

# GOALBITS

*Change your life using goal-based habits.*



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## **"THE FORTUNE TELLER"**

There was once a young man who contemplated his life a lot. He was always wondering if he was going to be successful? Was he going to be rich? Was he going to be famous? Over the years, he asked everyone he knew "do you think I am going to have a successful life?"

Everyone he asked replied "I can't answer that for you."

Still he wanted to know the answer to his question. After many years of not getting the answer, he made the decision to go see a Fortune Teller. He didn't particularly believe in Fortune Tellers, but he didn't know what else to do. He needed to know the answer to his question. So he found a Fortune Teller in his town and arranged to go see her.

The day of the appointment arrives and he goes to see the Fortune Teller at her place of business. He enters the small, non-descript building, and there sitting in a comfortable chair was the Fortune Teller.

"You must be the young man I spoke to earlier this week. What can I do for you?" asked the Fortune Teller kindly.

"I hope you can help. I want to know about my life. I want to know, am I going to be successful in life. Can you help me?" replied the boy.

"I can, with certainty" responded the Fortune Teller.

"Tell me what you do every day" continued the Fortune Teller.

"Aren't you supposed to look in a crystal ball or consult the cards" asked the young man puzzled.

"Answer my question and I will tell you how your life will turn out" responded the Fortune Teller.

Reluctantly the boy tells her. "I usually wake up late, I go to school, I come home, I do my homework quickly, I play computer games, I watch TV and then I go to bed."

"You will be poor in wealth and poor in health" said the Fortune Teller.

"That's terrible" said the young man "I'm doomed."

"No, you are not" said the Fortune Teller.

"I don't understand" said the young man, "you said you can tell what my life will be like with certainty."

"I can" said the Fortune Teller. "However, you can change your future at any time."

"How do I change my future? Can you tell me how?" said the young man.

"Daily deeds determine destiny's" said the Fortune Teller, "daily deeds determine destiny's". "What you do every day will become your destiny. If you change your daily deeds, you will change your destiny. You need to change your daily deeds, you need to change your habits."

"How do I do that?" asked the young man.

"First you need to decide how you want you life to be, and then you need to create habits to help you get you there" explained the Fortune Teller.

"So, I am in control of how my life will end up" said the young man. "If I decide how I want my life to end up, I can make it happen."

“This is true. Your daily deeds determine your destiny and you determine your daily deeds. Now you know the answer to the question you have always wanted to know was within you the whole time. Farewell young man. I wish you a good and successful life” said the Fortune Teller.



# INTRODUCTION

Take a look at yourself...

Are you as fit as you would like to be?

Have you written the book you always wanted to?

Are you the person you want to be?

However you answered those questions, I can tell you why. It's because of what you do day in day out.

It's because of your habits.

If you want to be fit, you must exercise more than one time. You must exercise every day.

If you want to write a book, you must write more than one time. You must write every day.

If you want to become a better person, you must work on it more than one time. You must work on it every day.

You can only make sustainable changes in your life if you work at it every day.



Studies have shown that up to 50% of what we do every day is not conscious decision, but rather habit. Think about that, half of everything you do, you do without even really thinking about. Imagine what would happen if you create the right habits. You could make progress in whatever area you want without even really thinking about it. Without even thinking about it - it doesn't get any easier than that!

This is where goalbits come in. A goalbit is a goal-based habit. Let me say that again, because this is important - **a goalbit is a goal-based habit**. A goalbit is a habit you build with a specific goal in mind.

Habits in general can either be good or bad. For example taking the dog for a walk every night after dinner or eating a large bag of chips while you watch TV every night. These are routines you just happen to have developed the habit of doing. If you think about what you do on a daily basis, I'm sure you can identify habits that are good for you and habits that are bad for you. You probably didn't consciously develop most of these habits, they just formed. Some of happen to be good and some of them happen to be bad.

A habit that you consciously form with the aim of helping you achieve a specific goal is a goalbit. This is the difference between a habit and a goalbit, a goalbit is a habit with a specific purpose.

Goalbits work for several reasons. First and foremost they are habitual so you do them every day, day in and day out. They break larger goals into smaller bits that you do repeatedly and these smaller bits accumulate over time to contribute to your larger goal. They work because you start small and build them over time.

Goalbits also work because they are also purposeful. You have to do the right things day after day. If you have a goal of running a marathon, reading books on marathon running every day won't help much. You have to get out of your chair and practice. Goalbits work because you are doing the right things on a daily basis.



# GOALS

Before you can create a goalbit, you need a goal. You need something specific to be working towards, a specific improvement you want to make in your life.

Most people have an idea of what they want, they just have trouble getting there. This is a very short introduction to the concept of goals because the habit part of goalbits is the main focus of this book. If you are interested in learning more about goals, I recommend reading my book "DONE" where I talk about goals in more depth.

As you are thinking about the goal for your goalbit, I have identified 3 simple criteria for a good goal you can use.

Goals should be **short**, **specific** and **scheduled**.

Your goal must be short and concise enough to be able to fit on a sticky note. The more complex your goal, the lower your chance of success.

Make your goal specific. Vague goals are impossible to achieve because you don't really know what it is you are trying to do.

Have a schedule, a deadline, for your completing goal. Knowing when you want to have achieved your goal by gives you a sense of urgency and is an antidote to procrastination.

If you have multiple goals pick the one you most want to do in each area of your life. It is important to only have one goal in each area of your life at a time. There is an old saying - *"If you chase two rabbits, you catch neither."*



# GOALBITS

Once you have your goal, you can create your goalbit. The goalbit is the habit you are going to create to help achieve the change or improvement you want to make in your life.

I have identified 3 important criteria for goalbits.

**Goalbits should be small, simple and sustainable.**

Applying these criteria to your goalbits will make them more achievable and give you the very best chance for success.

Goalbits should be small because research has shown that people are more successful in sticking to new habits or goalbits if they start small and build them up over time. Think about it, are you more likely to go from never running at all to running 5 miles overnight? Not likely. You are far more likely to go from never running to walking half a mile, to walking a mile quickly, to jogging a mile, to jogging 2 miles and so on. Start small, make that a habit and then grow it over time.

Goalbits should be simple because you want to remove as many obstacles to creating your new goalbit as possible. If you want to eat more healthily, you could

create a spreadsheet to track how many vegetables you eat at each meal each day or you could just decide to fill half your plate with vegetables. If you go the spreadsheet route you'd have to also remember to record your vegetable consumption as went through the day and then you'd have to remember to enter it in your spreadsheet at night. You stand a far greater chance of sustaining a simple goalbit.

Goalbits should be sustainable because you want to be able to do this new goalbit everyday, everywhere you go. If your goalbit was to use the stairclimber machine at the gym but you travel for work every other week you aren't going to be able to sustain this goalbit for very long. It would be better to make your goalbit to workout for 20 minutes a day. You can find a bodyweight workout you can do anywhere or you can use the stairclimber machine when you are able to get to the gym and do something else when you travel.

A good measurement of how your goalbit is written is whether or not you can write it on a sticky note. If you can, you have likely have a good goalbit.

Next, you need to make sure your goalbit has a trigger, something that will cause you to do your goalbit. This is a critical part of a goalbit. You need something to make



you do it. This is what makes it “automatic.” You don’t have to remember to do something at a random time. A trigger will set off your goalbit or routine and start you doing it. If you have a goalbit but no trigger its like have a car without an ignition, it’s like having a light bulb without a light switch. You have all this potential but nothing to set it in action. Triggers are things like a previous action, a time of day, an alarm or location. For example flushing the toilet triggers the habit of washing your hands. Or whenever you get notification of a new email you check to see who sent it to you. Remember, routines like these make up at least 50% of our daily actions every day.

Some examples of triggers are:

- After your shower.
- Making your breakfast.
- Walking in to the bathroom.
- After you brush your teeth.
- After you get dressed.
- When you make your lunch.
- Driving to work.
- Sitting down at your desk.
- After you drink your first coffee.
- When an alarm goes off.
- When a reminder pops up.

- At lunchtime.
- After you have eaten dinner at night
- At 8.00pm.

You should commit to doing your new goalbit every day for at least 60 days. Research has shown that the average new habit can take up to 60 days to really stick. Easier ones can actually take slightly less time to form but most goalbits can be formed within this 60 day timeframe.

Find a way to record your progress. You could find a habit-tracking app for your smartphone or draw a grid with 30 squares on 2 small pieces of paper (sticky notes work well) and put them up somewhere you will see it every day. Then mark down every day you do your goalbit. Commit to never missing more than one day in a row. The mind doesn't like to see breaks in a pattern so by seeing your growing chain of successful days it will encourage you to keep going. It's also a great motivator to see how many days you have already done.



# PERSEVERANCE

Goalbits take time to work. You may not notice a huge amount of progress in the first month. Stick with it!

The way people succeed in achieving their goals is by working on them for an extended period of time.

When you get to month two or three and look back at where you started and you will see progress.

Remember, the average habit takes 60 days to build.

Most people fail not because they weren't capable but because they didn't persevere. They get excited for a short period of time and then give up. The people who succeed are the ones who stick at it every day until they achieve their goal. Give your goalbit time and you will be successful.

Athletes are a good example. If you read the autobiography of a famous athlete you will find two things. First, they always know which race or big championship they are preparing for. It might be a race next month or it might be the Olympics in four years time. They always have a goal. Second, they train every single day. They don't wait until a month before the Olympics to start training, they train every day for four years. They make training a specific habit.

To help keep yourself motivated you can post a picture near your goalbit chart that reminds you why you are doing it. Maybe a picture of you when you weighed 20 pounds less, or a photo of your favorite best selling author. Something that reminds you of what you are going to achieve through your goalbit. Having this reminder, combined with making it an automatic habit that becomes second nature will help you keep going.

Once your goalbit has become something you are doing every day and you are getting better at it. Make it a bit bigger. If your goalbit is to run a mile a day, after the second month maybe you increase that to 2 miles. If your goalbit is to write for 10 minutes a day, extend it to 20 minutes a day. Once you are doing your new, bigger, goalbit every day and getting better at it - make it a bit bigger. Continue with upward spiral until you achieve your goal.



## CONCLUSION

To recap - Goalbits are goal-based habits. Goalbits are habits you create with a specific goal in mind. All you need is a goal, a small, simple and sustainable goalbit, and a trigger. It's really that simple.

I hope you have enjoyed learning about goalbits. This isn't just for entertainment however. You most likely decided to listen because you have a goal you have wanted to achieve for a while. Don't keep waiting for the time to be right to start. Remember the old saying "The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second best time is now." Start now!

If you liked learning about goalbits you can find more of my work on the web at [www.barney.me](http://www.barney.me).

Barney Matthews, September 2014.

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